1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

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be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. *Beliefs about Natural Phenomena*

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*poraś*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ha*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

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674 754 823 I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841 Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead. 841 Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were 826 removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841 All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

841 881 Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *paras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-kukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *kosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *urang kashla dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pega'; the *kapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *siral dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *kind dhati dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *hulta dudo*, the *harpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ailing*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjil* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bukril koruingna mai* is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *kalkur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *ofo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bison-horn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 36. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their *dura fastidiosa*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast; the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician.

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for the liver is the *jiwa* (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an uraskal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the uraskal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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7771 am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

787 The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a 844 child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

000 But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[826] [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jiv-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.